

73 Amateur Radio Today

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Swiech Yagi



Clayton Schmitt N7DKZ/HP3, David, Chiriqui, Panama Wayne, although you're not aware of it, our association predates the time when *73 Magazine* sold for 37 cents. I've followed your editorials and capitulated to most of your prodding over the years. At your insistence I've gone RTTY, SSB, FM, QRP, repeaters and much more. Also, I have enjoyed building a sizable number of your construction projects.

I started out almost 50 years ago as W0KTX and over the years have been KL7GDQ, WB7ETO, and now N7DKZ. I am retired and live in David, Chiriqui, Panama.

I would like to present you with an idea for *73*. Over the years you've had myriad excellent articles in *73*. Due to a number of moves during my professional career, I have had to give away my library of *73* magazines several times, always shedding tears the approximate size of elephant fecal matter. I know that the entire life span of *73* is available on microfilm. This is an excellent media, but it does present problems. Copying an article or a schematic is not the easiest thing to do. This leaves you with the option of drawing free-hand, with all the accompanying errors, or doing without. Plus, the microfilm reader is a pain.

I assume that you have retained the publication rights for the entire life of *73*. Since you are already in the CD-ROM publication business, why not put *73* on CD-ROMs? Possibly you have sufficient articles on such topics as antennas to market an entire CD-ROM on the subject. Or, combining antennas with QRP and other subjects would be sufficient to fill a diskette. As a last option, republish the entire life span of *73* on CD-ROMs. I assume your supply of editorials would be sufficient to fill several CD-ROMs.

Another suggestion, if I may: Why not code new listings in Uncle Wayne's Bookshelf with an asterisk or something? This would make it convenient to keep up on new publications that you have for sale. I would still have to read your entire listing on, say, antennas if I wanted to buy an antenna reference book.

A last suggestion, then I will sign off: Reorient your editorials to ham related subjects. When I buy a ham magazine I couldn't care less about UFOs, ESP, NDE, cold fusion, or regular reruns of your trials and tribulations in the music publishing business. I want to be fully informed on the latest state of the art in ham radio. The other subjects generally turn me off.

With that I'll go back to helping members of the local ham radio club construct 2 meter antennas based on the "Copper Dual-Band Super J-Pole Antenna" described in KAONAN's arti-

From the Ham Shack

cle in the April 1993 issue. Since I pay full price for my *73* subscription, I'm fully entitled to my opinion. I think *73* is a great magazine; however, your editorials burn up a lot of valuable space. Thanks for hearing me out.

Clayton—Go suck eggs ... Wayne

Paul Chapio KK5EF, Stephenville TX Wayne, Bravo on your "Never Say Die" column! My wife and I just returned from a trip to Malaysia and Singapore on a shoestring budget and had a ball. I highly recommend the mountainous areas of Malaysia, such as Cameron Highlands and Frazier's Hill.

I heartily agree with your challenge to people to explore and "get off their duffs." My wife takes care of six neglected and abused boys as our "job." With our small salary (albeit other immeasurable rewards), we surely have more fun than people earning multiples of our combined salaries. I am currently starting a radio club for our boys (if I may put in a plug—we need equipment). I feel that you and I are kindred spirits as I also have an entrepreneurial bent (I produced corporate videos for Fortune 500 companies in my previous life, before I "cashed out") and an appreciation of the arts, especially music. (I earned a B.A. in music while pursuing another degree because I was so fascinated by music—dual degrees!)

Anyway, my reason for writing is to express my opinions on the topic of boring QSOs. It seems a parallel exists in the arts. While pursuing my Master of Fine Arts degree, I had a professor named Charles Werberig at RIT in Rochester, New York, who had an exercise for graduate students who became too entangled in the *technology*. He would make them set down their Nikons, Sinar view cameras, digital light meters, and Zone System, and use a cheap plastic, non-focusable, non-adjustable camera called a Diana. The assignment: "Go out and shoot what is *important* to you!"

You see, we all stand the chance of becoming technicians, even in the arts. Amateur radio trains technicians, not effective or creative communicators. It's as though we've taught people to operate, troubleshoot, and even build their own printing presses, but they have nothing to say in print! My personal viewpoint is that the dilemma is beyond the scope of amateur radio—it's a people issue. People wishing to become more effective communicators can read more, go to journalism school, take creative writing courses, or practice art. But as long as the *Amateur Radio Handbook* remains a technical compendium, we are bound to have technically perfect (however boring) "emissions." (Look at our terminology.) Perhaps we should

have all our boring Extra Class licensees shut down their legal limit stations and get out a CB walkie-talkie until they become more interesting people and talk about what is important to them. Otherwise, they may fall into the technology and never come back out!

You are inspiring! Thanks.

Rege D. Dvorsky WA3LKT, Grasonville MD Wayne, I would like to comment on the excellent "lightning/grounding" articles you have had in *73* magazine over the last few months. I thought the articles were excellent and I know they have proved to be the same for many hams. I even had an old friend from Pittsburgh send me a copy (he didn't know I've subscribed).

I think every ham has gone through problems with grounding, RF in the shack, etc. As a matter of fact, I have just put in my own new grounding system, and it actually worked (potluck). Personally, I do not have money for luxuries such as VHF rigs for satellite operation, etc. I have enough problems keeping up my HF and 6 meter station. (I would love to get into satellite operating ... and I do track and listen to AO-21 and *Mir*. I have also tried the satellite on 10/15 meters and have had no luck with my dipole antenna.) Anyhow, I think it would be great to have more articles that relate to the nagging problems all hams have had, such as TVI, grounding, operating tips, DX QSL routes, and hidden apartment-type antennas.

I would also like to see an article once in a while about shortwave listening, such as the "numbers stations" you briefly mentioned in the March issue. I listen to airline communications all the time and haven't a clue what they are talking about. Also, I live on the bay here and would love to know where the HF maritime frequencies are. I think listing some of these interesting stations would really spark some interest in your readers.

James Alderman KF5WT, Carrollton TX Wayne, I read your editorials regularly and often agree with you, so I thought you might like to hear about an interesting thing that happened to me not long ago.

Recently, while traveling out of the Dallas area, I was talking with a gentleman on one of the metro-area's most popular repeaters. This gentleman was a retired veteran. I happened to mention that I believe flag burning to be wrong, and that it is also wrong to have a dope-smoking draft dodger commanding our armed forces, something he agreed with.

Suddenly another station broke in to say that we shouldn't be mentioning a political comment on the air because somebody might be listening and not agree with it. "It might be divisive," the station said. Well, about this time I began to drop out of range, but I could hear hams from everywhere coming on board not only to agree with my comment but, more important-

ly, to agree with my *right to say it*.

This guy said that good amateur courtesy mandates that "sex, religion and politics" not be mentioned on 2 meters. I looked in all my ham books, and it's not there. I looked in part 97, and it's not there either. So the *fact* is that I have the same right to speak as anyone else. The only breach of courtesy would be if I were to express my conviction and refuse to allow anybody else to have their turn on the repeater.

Now, on this repeater I have heard every view, from legalizing drugs to outlawing high school sports. In fact, the club that owns the repeater used to have an issue discussion net on the air; the day I heard it the subject was, "Should we have rebuilt Japan after defeating them in WWII?" And who could forget the lively discussion that ensued the day that "codeless licensing—pro or con" came up.

I remember when your magazine carried this question: "Think about the most interesting talk show that you've ever wanted to call in to, and ask yourself this: Why can't morning drive time on the repeaters in America be just that interesting?"

You're right, Wayne. Most of the conversation on repeaters amounts to a bunch of nothing. I like issue discussions—they challenge me to think and I always end up learning something by listening to varied views. Sad to say, very little stimulating conversation happens on ham radio.

When I told a non-ham friend how I had been chided for my remarks, he said, "I didn't want to tell you this but that's exactly why I have never wanted to get my ham license. All the times I've ridden with you I've never heard anything on that radio worth listening to." When I reminded him that he might need the radio in an emergency, he replied, "I've driven all over Texas—even into far west Texas—and have never driven out of cellular phone range." What could I say, Wayne? He was right.

You know, if intelligent and educated people stay away from amateur radio in droves, if we continue to scarcely utilize our valuable frequencies, rarely home-brewing our own gadgets or coming up with anything innovative, talking about nothing on the air and roasting those who wish to do otherwise, running off more people than we attract, can we be surprised if we lose all our bands to commercial interests? And if that happens, do we have anybody to blame but ourselves?

Atlee Kohl, Irving TX Wayne, your March 1995 editorial on the Internet was "too close for comfort." I've thought more than once about dramatically downsizing my own ham radio activities—in terms of both time and equipment—to allow for "Internet ops" on a variety of specialized subjects that greatly interest me. As you pointed out, ham radio could be there and beyond if wise decisions had been made by our ARRL leadership over the last three decades. 73